

Post 3/14/71

Office Tower Zoning In Arlington Approved

By Nancy Scannell
Washington Post Staff Writer

Some Arlington apartment dwellers who went to the County Board yesterday to protest a planned office tower that would cut off their Potomac River view were told that their own dwellings may be replaced by luxury residential towers.

The news left several of the protesters fuming that they would not allow such a thing to happen to their homes near Ft. Meyer Drive.

And their original protest apparently fell short of its goal: The County Board approved a package of rezonings that cleared the way for possibly two 19-story Rosslyn office towers, which would be the tallest buildings in Arlington.

The rezonings change the classification of three parcels of land from commercial office buildings to commercial high-rise buildings. One parcel, at 1614 N. Ft. Myer Dr., is owned by developer Robert E. Morrison, who sought the rezonings; the other two parcels are adjacent; one is owned by the county itself, and the other by a private resident.

The board approved the rezonings, 4 to 0, with member Jay E. Ricks abstaining. Ricks said he has a small interest in another Morrison venture in Washington and did not wish to risk possible conflict.

Morrison is negotiating to buy the two adjacent parcels. If he is successful, he intends to build twin 19-story office buildings. According to site plans he submitted for Board

approval, the buildings would be built in a diamond shape, with two corners touching.

Morrison said they would cost about \$10 million, could accommodate about 1,500 persons, and would have 3½ acres of parking, most of it underground.

See ARLINGTON, B2, Col. 1

Protest Against High-Rise Office Fails to Stop Arlington Rezoning

ARLINGTON, From B1

The ground floors of the 13-foot high building would be reserved for shops and a pedestrian plaza.

The board deferred action on the site plan, saying it wanted to gather more citizen comment before acting.

As part of his application for the rezoning, Morrison assured Board members he would give free easements for a metro substation on the site, thus saving the county an estimated \$60,000 in condemnation fees.

He also said the project would provide \$150,000 in new revenue for the county at current real estate tax rates.

After describing his plans for pedestrian plazas and penthouse restaurants, Morrison remarked that future office workers and visitors to his buildings would find his buildings "are the best sites in Rosslyn in terms of view."

The nearby residents apparently agreed and didn't like the idea of having the two buildings blocking their own view of the Mall and river.

Because of the connected diamond design, the length of the buildings would resemble "a 410-foot wall," said Wallace Dickson, an attorney.

Dickson said he was retained to oppose the site plan by E. Gerald Reinsch and two other property owners and was representing the roughly 30 persons at the meeting whose views would be blocked by Morrison's buildings, if constructed as proposed.

Reinsch, a member of the county's planning commission, owns the Reinsch Construction Corp. and most of the 12 acres of land where the residents' view would be blocked

by construction of high-rise office buildings.

"This is a matter of the economics of apartments versus the economics of office buildings," Dickson said. Since apartment buildings are more expensive to build, he added, developers must charge higher rents for dwelling units than for comparable space in an office building.

To compensate for the higher rents, Dickson said, developers often have to provide such amenities as a "room with a view."

Board member Jay E. Ricks then interrupted, "I hope you realize that Mr. Reinsch wants to develop high-rise apartments in that area . . . (and) that the people here today

are the ones to be replaced."

Dickson's response was non-committal. Some of the residents later said they had heard nothing of a plan to build a luxury high-rise apartment building where they live, and said they would oppose it.

No such plans were mentioned during the planning commission's meeting last week when the zoning case came up, although one commission member said yesterday that most of the members were aware of talk that Reinsch plans to develop a luxury high-rise apartment.

Reinsch did not vote on the Morrison zoning case, and could not be reached for comment yesterday.